

**CAMDEN COUNTY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT**

**AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**2006**

10/25/05

## **Assessment**

The environmental assessment has been developed by the Camden County Department of Health and Human Services Environmental Division to address environmental issues in Camden County. The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services is a county health department and is the certified local health agency for Camden County pursuant to NJSA 26:3-85 et seq., for the provision of environmental health services under the County Environmental Health Act, (CEHA).

## **County Community**

Camden County has a population of 510,000 and is comprised of 37 municipalities and covers 222 square miles. Camden County is largely urban in the Camden City, Gloucester City and Pennsauken municipalities which border the Delaware River, suburban in the middle as you move southeast and rural in the southeastern most townships of Winslow, Gloucester, and Waterford. The geographic breakdown is roughly 20% urban, 45% suburban, and 35% rural. The population breakdown is roughly 25% urban, 55% suburban and 20% rural. The citizenry is ethnically and racially diverse (White 76.6%, African American 16.2%, Hispanic 7.2%, Asian 3.7%, other 3.4%).

The housing stock is primarily single family dwellings with the majority of the suburban and urban construction being completed prior to 1960. There is currently a residential single family dwelling building boom in the rural municipalities of Gloucester, Winslow and Waterford. The median age in Camden County is 32.8 years and the median income is \$39,340.

Camden County is southeast of the City of Philadelphia and is bordered by Burlington County to the northeast, Atlantic County to the southeast, Gloucester County to the southwest and Philadelphia and the Delaware River to the northwest.

## **Environmental Issues**

### **Clean Air**

Air pollution is a major environmental issue in Camden County. The health risks associated with the inhalation of contaminated air is of major concern to all Camden County residents. We spend a significant amount of time, county wide, in addressing this very important issue. Our urban areas have the bulk of the industry which contributes to our total air pollution load.

Camden County's urban community activists continue to demand clean air for their community. This is quite evident with the law suit to block the construction and opening of St. Lawrence Cement. New permits and permit modifications continue to be a major issue for Camden City residents. They also are concerned and fighting against perceived or real environmental racism.

Camden County will continue to make clean air a top priority in its environmental protection programs. We will aggressively pursue violators and penalize where appropriate. We will complete the air toxics program in Waterfront South and look for other air toxics projects

where needed and where manpower and funding is available. Idling Enforcement and the placement of No Idling Signage will be a priority in 2006.

## **Clean Water**

Camden County's water needs are varied as the urban and suburban communities utilize public water supplies and our rural community is almost entirely dependant on private well water. Clean water and the health risks associated with the consumption of contaminated water are a major environmental concern in Camden County.

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services is aware of lead contamination associated with schools public water supply. Other school systems have had similar problems and have successfully addressed the issue with similar remedies. We have communicated with our school systems county wide to make them aware of the problem and remedies.

The Private Well Testing Act has exposed the need for regular private well testing by the owner. Required testing at the time of realty transaction has revealed significant private well contamination. Gross alpha, nitrate, volatile organic compounds and mercury violations of the potable water standards is occurring in roughly 35% of our realty transactions. As part of our normal office protocol, we notify the owner or real estate agency of the infraction, provide treatment options, provide a spill fund application if the contaminant is mercury or a volatile organic compound and test the private wells that are adjacent to the known contaminated well. With this protocol, we are able to quickly locate potential contaminated well clusters.

Public awareness and education are extremely important in getting private well owners to test annually for contaminants. We have been aggressive in this area but unsuccessful in convincing well owners to spend \$400 to \$500 per year on annual water testing.

Recreational use of our water ways continues to be an important issue in Camden County. We mobilize each year to conduct surface water testing to help determine the water bodies overall health. In 2002, we posted all of Camden County's property that bordered waterways with fish advisory signs. Included on the signage was a telephone number and web site address to get the individual fish consumption restrictions.

Camden County will continue to educate the public regarding the need for private well testing. We will conduct well testing for contiguous properties of contaminated wells and search for contaminated well clusters. We will educate our school superintendents on the need to test their water supply for lead contamination, and if contaminated, assist with remediation techniques. Healthy surface water will continue to be a priority and we will continue to support the surface water testing program in 2006.

## **Homeland Security/Hazardous Materials Team Preparedness/CBRNE.**

The post 911 era in the Emergency Response Community has completely altered the direction of the haz mat community. We are currently preparing for dirty bombs, bioterrorism incidents, nuclear events, terrorism events and nerve agent exposures. Federal funding has become available to purchase equipment and training. A significant amount of time is being expended researching equipment, training, drilling, and planning with other Camden County and State agencies. Camden County is also meeting with other contiguous counties to plan and drill together just in case a major CBRNE event occurs. We are also attempting to write contracts between

counties to provide haz mat services. One important feature of the contract is to address liability issues between counties.

Camden County has developed a haz mat task force to address hazardous materials, WMD, Weapons of Mass Destruction and CBRNE, Chemical, Biological, Radiological Nuclear and Explosive threats. We currently have 6 haz mat teams participating in the task force which include Camden County Health Department Haz Mat, Camden County Sheriffs Department Bomb Squad, Cherry Hill Township, Gloucester City, Waterford Township and Gloucester Township. Bellmawr Borough will be acting as a support agency only with limited equipment and trained personnel. We are currently negotiating with Camden City Fire to become a part of our Task Force. Associate members of the task force are the Camden County Prosecutors Office, Camden County Communications and the Camden County Office of Emergency Management. The task force meets every 2 months and discusses equipment purchasing, drilling, training and other issues facing the response community. We drill together on a regular basis and purchase like equipment which allows familiarity with other unit's equipment should one agencies equipment break down. This partnership has become an invaluable asset to Camden County and is quickly becoming a model to be duplicated throughout the State and Country.

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services will continue to pursue WMD/CBRNE grant opportunities. Training, drilling and planning for this type of incident will be a top priority. Obtaining formalized agreements to provide haz mat, WMD, CBRNE services between counties in Southern New Jersey is also a high priority.

## **Noise**

Camden County approved a noise control ordinance in 1993. We have a very aggressive noise enforcement program in place. Camden County's biggest noise issue comes from combination industrial residential zoning practices that have occurred in the past. Quikrete, a concrete manufacturing company, and Genardi's, a supermarket, will be the major noise problems for 2005. Quikrete located in Berlin Borough and Genardi's in Cherry Township are surrounded by residential properties. Camden County has cited Quikrete multiple times for noise violations in the past 3 years and collected over \$15,000 in penalties for past violations. Some progress has been made toward reducing violations and penalties. Genardi's is also a current noise problem that and has been fined \$5,000. Truck traffic and unloading of trucks is the issue at this facility. Truck traffic and backup beepers are a continuing problem in Camden County that will present a quality of life and enforcement issue in 2006.

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services will continue to provide noise control and enforcement throughout the County. Residential construction adjacent or near industrial and agricultural zoning and the increased motor vehicle traffic and the associated noise will be our noise control issues for 2006 and beyond.

## **Underground Storage Tanks**

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services currently participates in a pilot project that assists in the removal of home heating oil tanks. This project enables residential property owners the opportunity to remove an oil tank and receive a document from the NJDEP that the tank was removed in accordance with current NJDEP regulations. This project is very helpful to residents in that it may help them from getting scammed from unscrupulous contractors.

Camden County oversight enables us to advise the resident that there are being taken advantage of. This project is also very helpful with property resale. Having a letter in your possession from the NJDEP that the tank was removed in accordance with NJDEP regulations is helpful when the buyer discovers that an oil tank has been removed.

Camden County will be participating in the regulated tank inspection arena with a newly funded NJDEP position to handle regulated tanks in 2005/2006. This position will inspect regulated tanks, gas station regulated tanks and permits. The inspections will focus on leak detection equipment and the operation of the equipment. This program has been very successful in catching violators whose tank leak detection programs are not working or shut off. In several cases, we have determined that tanks were leaking from the inspection when the operator was not aware of the leak. This program is also successful in protecting the ground waters of the County and State. The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services will continue with the underground storage tank program if funding from the state is maintained at its current level.

### **Solid Waste Inspections/Enforcement**

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services spends a significant amount of its resources to inspect solid waste facilities and complaints. In addition, we have an interlocal agreement with the Pollution Control Finance Authority to enforce solid waste registration violations and the Department of Solid Waste to conduct recycling inspections. We will continue with the current efforts in this program in 2006. The Department of Public Works inspections have been completed and been referred to the NJDEP for actions if outstanding violations still remain. Camden County will continue to support the solid waste program with the inspection of solid waste facilities and complaints.

### **Other Environmental Issues**

Many other environmental issues face Camden County residents that are not illustrated but are no less important. They are Pesticide Control, Indoor Air Quality, Asbestos Exposure, Occupational Exposure to Toxic Substances, Electromagnetic Fields, Hazardous Waste Sites, Radon and a host of other unidentified issues. We will continue to act as the County lead in environmental services and act as a resource for all Camden County stakeholders.

### **Compliance Assistance for School Laboratory Chemical Management**

Camden County will complete this project in 2006 with 20 schools projected to be inspected. This project will help reduce the number of hazardous materials emergencies within our schools and reduce the potential chemical exposure to all students and staff.

### **Staffing and Resources**

The Camden County Department of Health and Human Services currently maintains an environmental field staff of 8 and 3 supervisors who conduct administrative duties with some limited field work. We are committed to continue with the previous illustrated environmental

activities as long as funding continues at its current levels. Expansion of current programs or adding new programs without increased funding from the County, State or Federal Government is out of the question.